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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [KNNP](#) [SENV](#) [GCC](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: KUWAIT'S NUCLEAR AMBITIONS FOCUSED ON REGIONAL
COOPERATION

REF: A. SECSTATE 17214

[1](#)B. KUWAIT 143

[1](#)1. (SBU) EconOffs delivered ref A demarche to the Acting Director-General of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), Dr. Mohammad Salman, on March 2. As far as he is aware, the GOK is not/not represented at the March 2-6 IAEA BOG meeting, as the Kuwaiti IAEA lead is traveling with the KISR DG. While Salman stated that he would check with the MFA regarding the possibility of Kuwait pledging funds for the NTI challenge grant, it is clear that the thrust of GOK nuclear planning is firmly within the context of the GCC's fledgling regional initiative.

[1](#)2. (SBU) EconOffs also met with KISR's Division Director for the Environment and Urban Development, Dr. Dhari Al-Ajmi, who is one of two KISR officials spearheading Kuwait's involvement in the GCC nuclear initiative and sits on the Kuwaiti National Committee on Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology. His colleague, KISR Deputy Director-General Dr. Nader Al-Awadhi, chairs the National Committee and serves as Kuwait's IAEA primary liaison (Al-Awadhi is currently the GOK's de facto nuclear program chief). Al-Ajmi said that KISR had spearheaded Kuwait's nuclear program planning since the 2006 GCC commitment to cooperate on peaceful nuclear development. He stressed that a GCC regional reactor would be at least 15 years away, given the need for study and capacity building. Al-Ajmi explained that the IAEA had recommended that the GCC conduct a series of studies, including site surveys, which had not started. He said that KISR was in the process of making a formal proposal to the GCC whereby KISR would take on responsibility for engaging an international consultant to further planning for the GCC's proposed regional reactor. Al-Ajmi noted that KSA, Qatar and UAE are also planning for modest nuclear capabilities independent of the GCC initiative.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Salman said that the Amir had reportedly expressed strong interest recently in Kuwait developing its own nuclear capability, adding that a Kuwaiti team is being formed to visit France to explore technical cooperation in the nuclear realm, apparently following discussions between President Sarkozy and the Amir in Kuwait on February 11 (ref B). Salman said that KISR expects to lead the inter-ministerial team but noted that a close advisor to the Foreign Minister, Adnan Shihab Eldin -- former OPEC Acting Secretary-General and former KISR Director-General -- appeared to be vying to take charge of Kuwait's nuclear planning processes, including the proposed visit to France.

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